

Series: Isaiah Series 2024

Title: When You Pass Through

Text: Is 43: 1-4

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When God gives us new testament eyes, we begin to see Christ magnified in all the scriptures. We see chronological order of what Christ accomplished from Isaiah 40 to Isaiah 43.

In Isaiah 40: 1-2 we have Christ crucified in place of God's holy city, his elect Jerusalem. Christ commands his preacher to cry to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The remainder of the chapter declares that all power in heaven and earth is given to Christ our Shepherd, who shall call and lead all his sheep unto the end.

In Isaiah 41, the LORD declared that he would make his church a new sharp threshing instrument. Before the Lord Jesus ascended to glory, he called his apostles and declared to them that all power in heaven and earth is his as the GodMan, Mediator. With that assurance, our Master commands us to go forth and preach Christ and him crucified. He promised to be with us always.

In Isaiah 42: 1, 21, as the gospel goes forth, God our Father speaks effectually through the Holy Spirit commanding all to "*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; ... The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.*" God declared Christ shall not fail. He has settled judgment at the cross. He shall set judgment in the hearts of his redeemed so that each one shall have spiritual discernment and believe on Christ.

But as Isaiah 42 ends God pours out judgment upon Israel because they rejected God's servant, Christ Jesus. They would not walk in his ways because they would not believe on Christ. They were not obedient to his law because they sought righteousness by their works rather than believing on Christ our Righteousness. "*Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart*" (Is 42: 24-25). That judgment came upon the political nation in 70AD when God sent the Roman army and destroyed Jerusalem. It will be far worse in the great day when God judges all who stand before him attempting to be accepted by their works rather than resting in Christ through faith.

So if we view our text in Isaiah 43 with new testament eyes, we see this is a word to God's elect, regenerated people who have been called out of the world to faith in Christ. This is a word to God's spiritual Israel called out from among Jew and Gentile.

Isaiah 43: 1: But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

Those saved by God's grace are his new creation. We were created and formed in divine election by God our Father. We were created and formed through the blood of Christ Jesus our Redeemer. We were created and formed in regeneration by God the Holy Spirit. Nothing of our Adam was used of God. Nothing of our sinful flesh could be used by God. Our triune God in Christ made us a new creation. And God created us for his glory.

Isaiah 43: 7: *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Those God has made a new creation give God all the glory for our salvation beginning to end.

Psalm 100: 3: Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4: Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

We gladly take our place as the sheep of his pasture. A sheep is a dumb, defenseless creature. Did you know that if a sheep rolls over on its back, it cannot get up? That is a good description of us. Helpless, defenseless sheep. But bless God we are the sheep of Christ Jesus our Shepherd! If that describes you then this is God's word to you.

Isaiah 43: 1: But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Christ's promise to you who believe is, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.*" The law held us for ransom. But Christ Jesus paid the price of his own blood. He bought us by satisfying God's justice on our behalf. So he says to you and me, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee!*"

Our irresistible Master promises, "*Fear not...I have called thee by thy name.*" Right now, as the gospel goes forth it is the general call commanding all to repent and believe on Christ. But the only way any sinner obeys is by God's irresistible call. "*I called thee by thy name.*" Zaccheus come down! Lazarus come forth! If you are a sinner who gives all the glory to God for calling you to faith in Christ then the Lord says, "*Fear not...I have called thee by thy name.*"

Christ promises his saints, "*Fear not...Thou art mine!*" Brethren, since Christ paid the price of his precious blood to redeem us, now, we are Christ's purchased possession.

Ephesians 1: 13...after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Child of God, there is coming a day when Christ shall redeem us out of this world, out of this body of death, into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Rom 8: 21). Then we shall be with Christ in glory forever. That is the redemption spoken of in Ephesians 1: 14. But from now until then, having redeemed us at Calvary, Christ will not lose one because we are his purchased possession. He promises we have no reason to fear because "*Thou art mine!*"

Since all this is so, surely God's saints will not have any trouble in this world. I remember when I was first baptized, my heart rejoiced in Christ so much that I thought it would be smooth sailing from then on. But soon I found out, I am still a sinner and this world hates my God and my Savior. Yet, our Redeemer gives us his precious promises, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*" Then he declares his promises concerning our trials.

A MUST

First, remember, the word of our Lord is "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). It is not a maybe, it is a must. Notice the wording in our text.

Isaiah 43: 2: WHEN thou passest through the waters,...WHEN thou walkest through the fire...

In order to redeem his people, it was a must that our Lord Jesus go through much tribulation. Why?

Hebrews 5: 8: Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Though Christ is God in human flesh, our Savior humbled himself and took upon him the form of a servant. As God he is Wisdom. But as a Man he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. That is what he is doing for us by these trials: he is teaching us by the trial. Through trials our Lord is growing us the knowledge of Christ and in the grace of Christ.

One, through trouble God teaches us not to trust self. In the trial we learn a little more that "in my flesh dwells no good thing." The trouble does not put anything in our flesh. But trouble reveals the sin that is still in the sinful nature of every sanctified child of God. We learn that only Christ is able to deliver us from the body of this death (Rom 7: 18-25).

Also, through trouble our Savior teaches us that nothing in this world will last. Christ is our one lasting possession! The same as Job was taught, so Solomon was taught and so we are taught. We come into this world naked and we shall depart with no possessions we acquired while here. For God's child, Christ is the one lasting possession that shall never be taken from us.

Ecclesiastes 5: 13: There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. 14: But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing in his hand. 15: As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. 16: And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?

In addition, through trouble Christ teaches us that we shall not prevail by our own strength. But the good news is neither shall our enemies prevail over us by their strength. God our Father is the first cause, even of the trial. By sore trouble he teaches us that it is God alone who keeps us and preserves us.

1 Samuel 2: 6: The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7: The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8: He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. 9: He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Using trouble, Christ teaches us that our life is a vapor. Take sickness for example. We are healthy one day and the next we get news we have cancer. We begin to chatter like Hezekiah and cry out, "Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me!" (Is 38: 14) Our Lord wakes us up and teaches us how quickly our life can end. Christ teaches us to redeem the time (Eph 5: 16). He teaches us to be about Christ's business like he was about his Father's business. Let us give ourselves to sending forth the gospel of Christ. Let us bear witness to perishing sinners that Christ is Salvation!

Through trouble our Lord keeps us humbled at his feet. He teaches us to depend entirely upon him alone. In the flood and the fire of trial he teaches us the sufficiency of his grace.

2 Corinthians 12: 7: And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8: For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10: Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

We could go on and on. But by the things our Lord teaches us through trouble, our gracious Redeemer always brings us to say,

Psalm 119:71: *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

I WILL BE WITH THEE

Our Lord promises us that we shall not be in the trouble alone.

Isaiah 43: 2: When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee;...

The word of our Lord Jesus promises, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb 13: 5). "*I will be with thee.*" When Nebuchadnezzar cast Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah into the fiery furnace,

Daniel 3: 24: Then Nebuchadnezzar [looked in and said]...Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Psalm 23: 4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul!
Friends may fail me, foes assail me
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

The apostle Paul experienced friends failing him and foes assailing him. But Paul also experienced the Lord standing with him. He told Timothy,

2 Timothy 4: 16: At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. 17: Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18: And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Child of God, in every trouble Christ is with you. He makes us know it by that still small voice speaking into our new spirit, commanding his promise,

Isaiah 41:10: Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

WHEN YOU PASS THROUGH

Since our Savior sent the trouble, since Christ rules the trouble, since Christ is with us in the trouble, Christ promises we shall pass through and come out bettered by it.

Isaiah 43: 2: When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

On the cross, Christ bore the mighty flood of God's judgment. He bore the fire of God's wrath. Christ did it in our place, on behalf of the elect given him of the Father. Therefore, God shall not pour out judgment a second time on those for whom Christ died. God is satisfied with his Son! And God is satisfied with his people in his Son!

The flood waters of trial are sent by our Lord and ruled by our Lord. The floods are for the same purpose as the Red Sea. They are to make God's saints behold Christ is our only Salvation. Every trial is a mini salvation. Each one makes us know with more certainty that Christ accomplished our eternal salvation on the cross. It is what he taught the children of Israel at the Red Sea. There the Lord commanded them,

Exodus 14: 13: Fear ye not: stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. 14: The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

The fire is for the same reason. It is to exalt Christ our Refiner who purges the dross of our producing and refines the gold of Christ's making so that we come to God with none but Christ our Righteousness.

Malachi 3: 3: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

He purges each one he has made a priest unto God. Our Lord consumes our dross of thinking we are righteous by our obedience to the law. He purges our dross of thinking we made ourselves holy by our morality. The pain of the trial is our sinful flesh. But concerning the real you, the inner man Christ made, Christ promises, "*thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*"

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine

So what should we do when the flood waters are deep and rising? One thing! Look to Christ! Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord!

The Lord brought Israel to the Jordan during the rainy season on purpose so that the Jordan River would be overflowing its banks. God told the priests to stand in the river and hold up the ark of the covenant. God commanded the children of Israel to simply look to the Ark. God dried up the river and they went across on dry ground.

Brethren, the trial is to make us to look to Christ our High Priest, our Ark, in whom is the unbroken law of God. He fulfilled the law for us. Not only this, when he makes us see we are yet sinners, it is to draw us to Christ our Mercy Seat who is the Propitiation for our sins. The purpose of the flood is to sweep away every refuge of lies so that we continue taking refuge in Christ alone!

What should I do in the fiery trial? Call upon his name! That is what the LORD said he would make us do. God's elect are the third part that our LORD brings through the fire.

Zechariah 13: 8: And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; but the third shall be left therein. 9: And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

Remember what God did for Job after Job's trial?

Job 42:12: So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning:

By the trial, God our Father grows us in the knowledge of Christ. He teaches us to trust Christ more and teaches us more that we are to put no confidence in our flesh (Php 3:3). He brings us to cry out with more assurance, "The LORD is my God!" That is how he blesses us in the latter end of the trial more than the beginning. It is Christ who does this and Christ shall not fail!

Psalms 66: 16: Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

Psalms 66: 8: O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: 9: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. 10: For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. 11: Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 12: Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.

That wealthy place is Christ and his unsearchable riches of Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption! Beholding him more, believing him more, following him more closely, he blesses our latter end more than our beginning.

Amen!